

# U.S. Can't Explain U.F.O.s, Report Says, and Doesn't Rule Out Aliens

By JULIAN E. BARNES

WASHINGTON — The government still has no explanation for nearly all of the scores of unidentified aerial phenomena reported over almost two decades and investigated by a Pentagon task force, according to a report released on Friday, a result that is likely to fuel theories of otherworldly visitations.

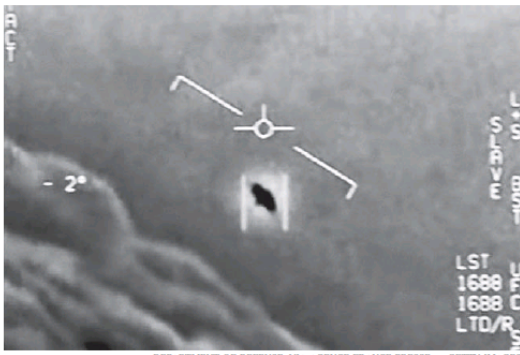
A total of 143 reports gathered since 2004 remain unexplained, the document released by the Office of the Director of National Intelligence said. Of those, 21 reports of unknown phenomena, involving 18 episodes, possibly demonstrate technological capabilities that are unknown to the United States: objects moving without observable propulsion or with rapid acceleration that is believed to be beyond the capabilities of Russia, China or other terrestrial nations. But, the report said, more rigorous analysis of those episodes is needed.

There is no evidence any of the episodes involve secret U.S. weapons programs, unknown technology from Russia or China or extraterrestrial visitations. But the government report did not rule out those explanations.

The nine-page report essentially declines to draw conclusions, announcing the reporting is “largely inconclusive” and noting limited and inconsistent data created a challenge in evaluating the phenomena.

The report said the number of sightings was too limited for a detailed pattern analysis. While they clustered around military training grounds, the report found that that could be the result of collection bias or the presence of cutting-edge sensors in those areas.

Government officials outlined a plan to develop, if additional fund-



DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE, VIA AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE — GETTY IMAGES

The U.S. Navy has officially published previously released videos showing unexplained objects. A still image from one, above.

ing is available, a better program to observe and collect data on future unexplained phenomena.

The failure to reach a conclusion on the unexplained episodes raised questions about how seriously the government has taken them until now and whether it had assembled adequate scientific expertise to examine them.

Too little data exists to draw a conclusion about many of the episodes, officials said. But both scientific experts and enthusiastic amateurs have advanced explanations ranging from the mundane to the otherworldly and the report did little to substantiate or dismiss their theories.

Government officials on Friday were reluctant to acknowledge the potential that the phenomena could be extraterrestrial craft, a signal of how unlikely they view that explanation.

There was no affirmative evidence that the unexplained phenomena are alien spacecraft in the

report. But because the government has offered no explanation for so many of the episodes, the new report is sure to fuel the enthusiasm of those who believe they could be.

Among the unexplained incidents are three high-profile videos of aerial phenomena taken by the U.S. Navy and witnessed by pilots in recent years.

The report released on Friday is an interim report, which is how former officials involved in the Pentagon examination had predicted the government would initially handle the requirement by Congress to submit an unclassified report on what it knows about U.F.O.s.

The government intends to update Congress within 90 days on efforts to develop an improved collection strategy and what officials are calling a technical road map to develop technology to better observe the phenomena, senior government officials told re-

porters on Friday. Officials said they would provide lawmakers with periodical updates beyond that.

The Pentagon and intelligence agencies have eschewed the term U.F.O. and refer instead to U.A.P., or unidentified aerial phenomena. It has been a bit of rebranding, both to cut down on public enthusiasm and remove the stigma that U.F.O. can carry, in order to encourage pilots to report their observations and scientists to study them.

The new report laid out five categories of possible explanation for the phenomena: a secret technology developed by an adversarial power like Russia and China, classified cutting-edge American technology, a naturally occurring phenomenon, airborne clutter such as errant weather balloons and a catchall “other” category. That final group could include extraterrestrial technology.

But of the episodes examined by the task force, only one could be identified and categorized: “a large, deflating balloon” that was classified as airborne clutter.

Officials do not have any indications that the unexplained incidents show objects that are part of a foreign intelligence collection program or a major technological advancement by a potential adversary, a senior government official said. They are also unable to confirm that any of those incidents are part of a U.S. government or defense industry program, a senior official said.

Nevertheless, the report does not completely rule out a Russian or Chinese aircraft or an American classified program.

The report was made public because of a provision inserted by Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, the top Republican on the Senate

Intelligence Committee, into a huge spending bill passed by Congress.

“The Defense Department and intelligence community have a lot of work to do before we can actually understand whether these aerial threats present a serious national security concern,” Mr. Rubio said.

Of the incidents examined by the task force, there are “no clear indications that there is any non-terrestrial explanation” for them, said a senior official, adding that the government would “go where

gram in 2020.

Government officials said that on further examination, the 21 reports that show unusual acceleration or movement could prove to have normal explanations. Government analysts have scrutinized the cameras and sensors that recorded the phenomena for potential flaws, a senior government official said.

The cameras sensors that recorded some of the episodes were not “generally suited for identifying” unknown phenomena, the report said.

There are plausible, but dry, explanations for each of the Navy recordings that are more likely than some sort of extraordinary technology, said Mick West, a science writer who focuses on debunking conspiracy theories.

“They’re not making any big claims; they’re saying some of the things they see seem to show unusual behavior and more study is needed,” Mr. West said. “Obviously, they’re not saying it’s aliens — they’re not going anywhere near that.”

Later on Friday, the Pentagon announced it would develop procedures to collect data and analyze reports of unidentified phenomena, adding staffing and other resources to examine the episodes.

The effort may require some outside expertise, but scientists, who have long avoided studying U.F.O.s, are likely going to need cajoling.

“Nobody wants to risk being flamed by the true believers or ostracized by their peers,” said Chris Impey, an astronomy professor at the University of Arizona. “If the Pentagon or the government asks for scientific input and gives them some data and a little resources, people would participate.”

## Man Held in Bronx Shooting That Almost Hit 2 Children

By PRECIOUS FONDREN

A 27-year-old man on parole was arrested on Friday in a brazen, broad-daylight shooting in the Bronx that gained widespread attention after two children caught in a hail of bullets narrowly escaped being hurt, officials said.

The man, Michael Lopez, of Manhattan, was expected to be arraigned later in the day on attempted murder and other charges, officials said at an after-

noon news conference.

In addition to being on parole for an attempted assault conviction, Mr. Lopez faces a robbery charge stemming from an episode since he left prison in which he is accused of brandishing a knife, officials said.

“I think the main question we all should be asking is, ‘How does an individual released to parole get arrested for a knife-point robbery and is walking around on the streets?’” Dermot F. Shea, the police commissioner, said. “Is that justice for those little kids?”

The shooting was captured by security cameras, with the footage showing a 13-year-old girl and her 5-year-old brother among several passers-by who rushed toward a bodega for safety when a gunman ran up and began shooting at a second man. (The police initially said the girl was 10.)

In the chaos, the children and the gunman’s intended target collided and fell to the pavement as bullets continued to fly at close range. The girl can be seen shielding her brother as best as she can. Amazingly, neither child was shot. The gunman’s target was hit in the legs and back and was expected to survive, the police said. The gunman hopped onto a wait-

ing scooter and rode off. The police said they were still looking for the scooter driver.

The shooting, on Sheridan Avenue in the Claremont section on June 17, was the latest of several episodes involving children caught in the middle of a spike in gun violence that has plagued some neighborhoods and made crime a dominant issue in this year’s mayor’s race.

About a week earlier, a 10-year-old Queens boy was fatally shot while leaving an aunt’s house in the Rockaways. In May, a 4-year-old girl was among several people shot in Times Square by a street vendor who the police said was battling over turf.

Eric Adams, who leads the Democratic mayoral primary field after an initial vote tally, was among the candidates to condemn the Bronx shooting, citing it as a stark example of why he had focused his campaign on issues of crime and public safety.

“I am not going back to the days where our babies were waking up to gunshots and not alarm clocks,” Mr. Adams, the Brooklyn borough president and a former police captain, said last weekend while offering a \$2,000 reward for information that led to an arrest.

New York is among a number of cities in the United States to experience an increase in gun violence that began last year during the pandemic and has persisted into the first half of this year. As of June 13, 721 people had been shot in New York, the most to that point in the year since 2002, Police Department statistics show.

The rise in gun violence in the city has mostly been concentrated in a few neighborhoods, including the one where the June 17 shooting happened.

“This case got worldwide attention because of the video and those children,” Darcel D. Clark, the Bronx district attorney, said at the news conference on Friday.

“But there are cases like this every day where lives are being ruined. No one hears about them, but the damage is there.”



JEENAH MOON FOR THE NEW YORK TIMES

Eric Adams, speaking Friday to a labor group in Manhattan, leads the Democratic primary voting, which may not be final for weeks.

## Adams, Not Yet Nominee, Pushes Early Transition

By JEFFERY C. MAYS

Eric Adams, the Brooklyn borough president and the leading vote-getter in the Democratic primary, said on Friday that the city could not afford to wait until after the general election in November for the next administration to get started. Instead, he added, Mayor Bill de Blasio should begin the transition as soon as the winner in the Democratic primary is announced in mid-July.

Mr. Adams, 60, who holds a nine-point lead over Maya Wiley also announced that he would be traveling around the city to discuss his vision on pressing issues such as tackling a rise in gun violence, even as the city continues to tabulate votes in its first ranked-choice election.

As proof of his commitment, Mr. Adams pointed to his new footwear.

“That’s why I traded my shoes for my sneakers,” he said, looking down at the white sneakers he wore with his dress pants and white dress shirt.

The usual process calls for the next mayor to be determined by voters in November and then take office on Jan. 1. This year’s primary was held about three months earlier than in the past.

But because there are many more Democrats than Republicans in the city, the winner of the Democratic primary is likely to win the general election on Nov. 2. Curtis Sliwa, the founder of the Guardian Angels, has already been declared the winner of the Republican primary. Mr. Adams suggested that Mr. de Blasio meet with both nominees, an idea that Mr. Sliwa rejected.

“He knows if I am invited to City

Hall I’ll be out near the bathroom and it would be a sit down between two best friends,” Mr. Sliwa said.

Though Mr. Adams at times sounded like a mayor-elect, he insisted that he will respect the process — but also that he had a responsibility to move ahead on the city’s challenges.

“We know the votes must be counted. We know there’s a process. We’re going to follow that process,” said Mr. Adams, speaking before members of 32BJ S.E.I.U., a New York local of the Service Employees International Union. “But while that process is

**The issues facing the city are too severe to delay, he says.**

playing out we’re going to send a signal to New Yorkers.”

Mr. Adams said November was too long to wait to begin a transition given the economic and gun violence problems the city is facing. He has already called on Mr. de Blasio to adopt his plan to address gun violence.

“July 12 the results should be known. July 13 there should be an immediate sit down, build out a real transition team, build out a meeting with all the commissioners,” for both the Democratic and Republican nominees, Mr. Adams said. “We can’t say let’s start from scratch on Jan. 1. That’s unfair to New Yorkers.”

Mr. Adams said he wanted to make sure that federal stimulus money as part of pandemic relief

was used to address the rise in violent crime and that he planned to reach out to City Council Speaker Corey Johnson and other City Council leaders. The deadline to approve the city’s \$99 billion proposed budget is June 30.

“We need to use the money smartly to ensure that we can deal with the inequalities that I believe produce the violence, but there are some things that we should be doing immediately to go after the violence we see on our streets,” Mr. Adams said.

The city will receive at least \$14 billion in pandemic-related aid over the next few years.

Mr. de Blasio was noncommittal in response to Mr. Adams’s proposal to accelerate the transition process.

There will be “informal conversations with winning campaigns following the primary and a formal transition process following the general election,” said Bill Neidhardt, the mayor’s press secretary. “In the meantime, the mayor is focused on our recovery.”

Ms. Wiley and Kathryn Garcia, the former sanitation commissioner, who is in third place after the first ballot, took issue with Mr. Adams’ stance.

A spokesman for Ms. Wiley said it was “premature and disrespectful to discuss transitions when we have not yet come close to counting all the votes yet.”

Annika Reno, a spokeswoman for Ms. Garcia, said the “Democratic Primary for mayor is not over,” noting that there were still first-place absentee votes and ranked-choice votes to be tabulated.

“All candidates should respect the Democratic process and wait until all of the votes are counted

before getting ahead of themselves on transition,” Ms. Reno added.

Mr. Adams has already begun to move ahead in crafting the outline of his administration, consulting with people like David C. Banks, the president and chief executive of the Eagle Academy Foundation, a network of prep schools; Sheena Wright, president and chief executive of United Way of New York City and Kathryn Wyde, president of the Partnership for New York City, an influential business group.

“It’s really smart to lay out a vision for moving the city forward because we are in the midst of a crisis of gun violence and the economic crisis is affecting the city,” said Juanita Scarlett, a democratic strategist who helped Mr. Adams create his 100 point plan for the city. “It shows he’s listening to everyday New Yorkers.”

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